
An Error Analysis in Verbs and Verb Groups in Narrative and Recount Texts Produced by Language Stream Students of SMA Negeri 3

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Abstract

This paper is about an analysis of grammatical errors, particularly in verbs and verb groups found in narrative and recount texts produced by Language Stream students of SMA Negeri 3 Surabaya. The aim of this analysis is to find out types of errors regarding verbs and verb groups that mostly occurred. This study is important to conduct since there are many errors in verbs and verb groups which are often found in the students' writing. The data were taken from the student's writing in two classes of Language Stream: 16 students from 11th grade and 15 students from 12th grade. The total number of the participants is 31 students. The writer analyzed the data based on taxonomy of errors proposed by Ho (2005). This study found that total number of errors is 1,075. The majority of errors occur in 'omission of suffix -s/ -es/ -d/ -ed/ -ing (457 or 42.5% cases). The second biggest error occurs in 'inappropriate form of tenses in verbs and auxiliary verbs' (one of subcategory of miscellaneous) that occurs 311 or 28.9% cases. Results indicate that the main problem of errors in the verbs and verb groups in the students' narrative and recount texts seems to be the lack knowledge of past tense usage.

Keywords: error analysis, errors taxonomy, verb and verb groups, narrative text, recount text

Introduction

In senior high school, writing in English is one of four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) taught. Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP) (translated as the multi-tiered education curriculum), which was started in 2006, recommends the introduction of twelve types of text to develop senior high school students' English language skills which are recount, narrative, procedural, descriptive, report, news items, analytical exposition, persuasive exposition, spoof, explanation, discussion and review (Depdiknas, 2006). The target competence of English is to understand, comprehend, and produce those twelve text types.

To support students to have a good ability in producing some texts, the students should understand three language components, which are grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Grammar, according to Rutherford (1987) is a necessary component of any language teaching program. Among those three components, grammar is considered an important component of the basic foundation to support the language learning skills because it is a set of rules that allow us to combine words in language into larger units (Greenbaum, 2002, p.1).

The differences in grammatical system between Bahasa Indonesia and English often create difficulties to the Indonesian learners. One of the grammatical system differences between Bahasa Indonesia and English is Tenses. Ho (2005, p.49) said that tense is correlated with the location of a situation in time. Indonesian does not have tenses like English. Because of that reason, Indonesian learners usually make errors during their English learning process. The errors production can occur in the oral and written expression (Ubol, 1981, p.8). However, errors are natural part of language learning (Lightbrown, 1997). This suggests that making some errors is natural for second language learners because making errors is a stage of learning process. Some errors made by second language learners in their learning process can be studied through error analysis. It observes, analyzes, and

classifies the errors to reveal something of the system operating within the learner (Brown, 2007, p.259).

In these recent years, several studies about grammatical errors have been conducted. Utomo (2007) and Aprilia (2011) analyzed the errors of writing in the whole area of parts of speech, while Mahardika (2008) analyzed grammatical errors by more focussing on tenses, articles, agreement, and passive. Meanwhile, Gustilo (2009) analyzed the errors of writing in the most specific way than another. Gustilo analyzed the writing by focusing in the sentence level errors. None of those studies analyze errors of writing by focusing on verbs and verb groups. This study analyzes the errors of writing focusing on verbs and verb groups based on error taxonomy theory of verbs and verb groups (Ho, 2005). This study also provides data about the errors of verbs and verbs groups concerning verb type, modality and voice (Ho, 2005).

The aim of this analysis is to find out types of errors in verbs and verb groups that often occur in narrative and recount texts produced by the Language Stream students of SMA Negeri 3 Surabaya. Error in verbs and verb groups was chosen by the writer because verb is considered the most important constituent in the sentence, since regular sentences may consist of only a verb: imperatives such as 'Help!' and 'Look!' (Greenbaum, 2002, p.21).

Methodology

A qualitative approach was used in this study since it tries to describe and explain the condition of the obtained data in their natural setting. The data consists of narrative and recount texts by Language Stream students of SMA Negeri 3 Surabaya, which consist of 16 students from 11th grade and 15 students from 12th grade. Narrative and recount texts were chosen by the writer because these can be found in all forms of human creativity and art, such as: speech, writing, songs, film, video, theatre, and games.

In order to get the proper data, the writing test was conducted in the classroom for 90 minutes. The students were asked to write down a page of narrative and recount texts approximately 500 words with a free topic by their English teacher. Dictionary usage was prohibited since problems in English as a second language were analyzed in this research and the use of dictionaries could reduce many of these problems from the students' writing production text.

After collecting the data, the writer highlighted clauses and sentences which contain errors in the student's writing, identified types of error, specifically by concerning in verbs and verb group errors, and classified the errors according to their type. Then, the writer stated the violated grammar rule and gave the correct form to show contrast with the inappropriate or deviated form. Finally, the writer calculated the percentage in each types of errors by using a formula as follows: $(F/N) \times 100\% = n\%$ (F=the number of errors in each type; N=the total number of errors; n=the result) and determined the type of errors that mostly occurred.

The writer analyzes the errors by adapting Ho's (2005) error taxonomy regarding verbs and verb groups:

- a. Omission of suffix -s/ -es/ -ed/ -ing
- b. Omission of -ed participle after a form of the verb be
- c. Inappropriate form after modal verb (Unnecessary insertion/ Overgeneralization of suffix -s, -ed, -ing, infinitive to)
- d. Inappropriate form after modal verb (Omission of suffix -ed in past perfect form)
- e. Omission of direct object
- f. Omission of infinitive to
- g. Omission of -ing participle
- h. Omission of auxiliary verb
- i. Inversion of verb-subject in indirect question format

Analysis and Results

Based on the collected data from 31 texts of students' narrative and recount texts, all type of errors proposed by Ho are found in the students' writing. The total number of errors is 1075 (a thousand seventy nine) cases. However, there are also errors that cannot be assigned to the classification of Ho. Therefore, these errors are grouped into miscellaneous classification. Miscellaneous classification is divided into three categories: unnecessary insertion of auxiliary verb/ verb, inappropriate form of tenses in verb and auxiliary verb, and omission of 'be' as main verb. The writer found that the majority of errors (42.5%) come from 'omission of suffix -s/ -es/ -d/ -ed/ -ing'. The second biggest errors (38.1%) are from 'miscellaneous error', which is not classified by Ho, while the biggest error of miscellaneous subcategories is 'inappropriate form of tenses in verb and auxiliary verb' (311 cases or 28.9 %).

No	Types of Errors	Total	%
1	Omission of suffix -s/ -es/ -d/ -ed/ -ing	457	42.5%
2	Omission of -ed participle after a form of the verb <i>be</i>	29	2.8%
3	Inappropriate form after modal verb (Unnecessary insertion/ Overgeneralization of suffix -s, -ed, -ing, infinitive to)	26	2.4%
4	Inappropriate form after modal verb (Omission of suffix -ed in past perfect form)	4	0.4%
5	Omission of direct object	18	1.7%
6	Omission of infinitive <i>to</i>	36	3.3%
7	Omission of -ing participle	9	0.8%
8	Omission of auxiliary verb	71	6.6%
9	Inversion of verb-subject in indirect question format	12	1.1%
10	Miscellaneous	413	38.4%
	Unnecessary insertion of auxiliary verb/ verb (35; 3.3%) Inappropriate form of tenses in verb and auxiliary verb (311; 28.9%) Omission of 'be' as main verb (67; 6.2%)		
	Total	1075	100%

Table 1 Types of Errors and Number of Occurrences

Omission of suffix -s/ -es/ -ed/ -ing

There are 457 or 42.5% cases occurring in the texts. These cases are considered the biggest problem of the students' narrative and recount texts. Finite verb can be marked for tense (present or past). All of the verbs in the sentences need a suffix -d/ -ed to be marked as past tense because narrative and recount texts use past tense, as can be seen in the following examples:

Error	Suggested Correction
She just live with her mother	She just lived with her mother
Debby really need a kidney transplant	Debby really needed a kidney transplant
... he accept a kidney from a donor	... he accepted a kidney from a donor
I stay in a moment at Cilacap	I stayed in a moment at Cilacap

Omission of -ed participle after a form of the verb *be*

There are 29 or 2.8% cases occurring in the texts. In the sentences in which these cases occur, the past participle -ed after a form of the verb 'be' is omitted, which is incorrect. The 'past participle -

ed/-d is used in the present perfect tense, past perfect tense, passive voice, and as adjectives or stative passive. These error cases can be seen in the following examples:

Error	Suggested Correction
He had help me before, so I give him my number	He had helped me before, so I give him my number
I was very scare	I was very scared
They finally were deposit at the orphanage	They finally were deposited at the orphanage

From those sentences above, it can be seen that ‘past participle *-ed*’ form is used after past form of auxiliary verb ‘had’ in the past perfect tense and past form of *be* ‘was/ were’ in the passive voice and stative passive form.

Inappropriate form after modal verb (Unnecessary insertion/ Overgeneralization of suffix *-s, -ed, -ing, infinitive to*)

There are 26 or 2.4% cases occurring in the texts. In the sentences in which these cases occur, the form of verb after modal verb is unnecessary. These sentences are ungrammatical because they are followed by infinitive *to*, verbs which have a final *-s*, verbs which are in the past form, and verbs which have a final *-ing* after the modal verbs. All of modal verbs should be immediately followed by the simple form of a verb. The samples of these error cases are as follows:

Error	Suggested Correction
I can to get the bad score	I can get the bad score
... father <i>will</i> educated you	father <i>would</i> educate you
he could not received such a lesson ...	he could not receive such a lesson ...
he should wrestled with the scriptures	he should wrestle with the scriptures
Muchlas should changed his spoiled	Muchlas should change his spoiled

Inappropriate form after modal verb (Omission of suffix *-ed* in past perfect form)

There are 4 or 0.4% cases occurring in the texts. The ‘past participle form’ (*be* + past participle) can be used in passive voice and past perfect form. In the sentences in which these cases occur, the past participle form of verb after ‘modal + *be*’ is omitted. These sentences should be followed by ‘*be* + past participle’ after modal verb because these sentences are passive modal. The form of passive modal is ‘modal + *be* + past participle’. The past participle of regular verbs is the same as the simple form that be ended in *-ed*, while there are no rules of the past participle for irregular verbs. This ‘past participle’ form also prevails in the form after modal verb on past perfect. The samples of these error cases can be seen below:

Error	Suggested Correction
I <i>will</i> be respect by them	I <i>would</i> be respected by them
the journey to find the black <i>will</i> ^ continue tomorrow	the journey to find the black <i>would be</i> continued tomorrow
heaven must be enter by people	heaven must be entered by people
man will be enter into the hell alone by angel	man will be entered into the hell alone by angel

It can be seen that the modal verbs should be followed by the simple form of ‘*be*’ before ‘past participle *-ed*’ because all of modal verbs must be followed by the simple form of a verb. The past

participle is needed in the passive modal sentence after the modal is followed by the simple form of 'be'.

Omission of direct object

There are 18 or 1.7% cases occurring in the texts. In the sentences in which these cases occur, the direct object after verb is omitted, making the sentences incomplete and ambiguous. It also may create confusion to the readers in understanding these sentences. Thus, direct object should be added in these sentence cases. The errors in omission of direct object can be seen in the following examples:

Error	Suggested Correction
she really <i>do</i> not believe ^ because ...	she really <i>did</i> not believe it because ...
I was pounding ^ with the handle	I was pounding it with the handle
he <i>love</i> ^ at first impression	he <i>loved</i> her at first impression
Rina got ^ instantly	Rina got it instantly

The sentence cases indicate that the omission of direct object after verbs can make the sentences become incomplete and ambiguous. Those sentences should be added by 'direct object' after verb in order that those sentences become easier to be understood by the readers.

Omission of infinitive to

There are 36 or 3.3% cases occurring in the texts. In the sentences in which these cases occur, the 'infinitive to' is omitted. These sentences need an 'infinitive to' to express a purpose of main verb. Infinitive 'to' can be used in: 'verb + infinitive', 'verb + (pro)noun + infinitive', and 'be + adjective + infinitive'. These error cases can be seen in the following examples:

Error	Suggested Correction
we continue ^ play in taman rekreasi sengkaling	we continue to play in taman rekreasi sengkaling
stepmother made Cinderella ^ do ...	stepmother made Cinderella to do ...
I ^ late ^ study ...	I <i>was</i> late to study ...
15 years child <i>want</i> ^ <i>played</i> and fight	15 years child <i>wanted</i> to <i>play</i> and fight

The example of error in 'verb + infinitive to' can be seen in the first sentence. The example of error in 'verb + (pro)noun + infinitive to' can be seen in the second sentence. The example of error in 'be' + adjectives + infinitive' can be seen in the third sentence. 'Infinitive to' should be followed with the simple form of verb. Thus, the verb after 'infinitive to' in the fourth sentence should be changed to simple form of verb.

Omission of -ing participle

There are 9 or 0.8% cases occurring in the texts. In the sentences, the present participle *-ing* after *be* is omitted. The present participle *-ing* is used in present progressive and past progressive. The past progressive tense may occur in narrative and recount texts. The past progressive expresses an activity that was in progress at a point of time in the past or at the time of another action. The samples of this sentence error that occur in the students' narrative and recount texts can be seen below:

Error	Suggested Correction
When the ceremony begin, the school principal ^ brief on school	When the ceremony began, the school principal was briefing on school
While it was raining, they ^ shelter in front of the store	While it was raining, they were sheltering in front of the store
When he plays with friend, he was see the uniforms had Niko	When he played with friend, he was seeing the uniforms had Niko

The first and third cases mean that both actions occurred at the same time, but one action began earlier and was still in progress when the other action occurred. Sometimes past progressive is also used in both parts of a sentence when two actions are in progress simultaneously such as in the second case.

Omission of auxiliary verb

There are 71 or 6.6% cases occurring in the texts. In the sentences in which these cases occur, auxiliary verb of these sentences is omitted. According to Ho (2005, p. xi), auxiliary verb is one of the verbs ‘have’, ‘be’, and ‘do’ when used with the main verb forms. This study found four forms of cases in omission of auxiliary verb, which are omission of auxiliary verb in the passive voice that has a rule as: ‘be + past participle’, omission of auxiliary verb in the past progressive tense that has a rule as: ‘be + present participle’, omission of auxiliary verb in the question sentence that has a rule as: ‘auxiliary verb + noun + simple form of verb’, and omission of auxiliary verb in the negative sentence that has a rule as: ‘auxiliary verb + not + simple form of verb’. The sample of these error cases can be seen below:

Error	Suggested Correction
I ^ punished by the teacher to do a lot of homeworks	I was punished by the teacher to do a lot of homeworks
sofi know that she ^ waiting his loved	sofi knew that she was waiting his loved
she ask “why ^ you give me flower and ring?”	she asked “why do you give me flower and ring?”
they ^ not listen to the elder anymore	they did not listen to the elder anymore

From those sentences above, it can be seen that the auxiliary verbs *was/were/did/had* ‘past form of modal’ may be used in narrative and recount text because all of them are past form of auxiliary verb. Auxiliary verbs ‘*was/were*’ are used in the passive voice and past progressive of negative and question sentence. It is followed by noun and past participle for passive voice and present participle for past progressive. While auxiliary verb ‘*did*’ is used in past present of negative and question sentence. It is followed by noun and simple form of verb. Meanwhile, auxiliary ‘*had*’ is used in the past perfect tense with the singular/ plural subject. It is also followed by noun and past participle. The past form of Modal auxiliaries also may be used in narrative and recount texts. Modal auxiliary can be used in possitive, negative, and interrogative sentences and is followed by simple form of verb.

Inversion of verb-subject in indirect question format

There are 12 or 1.1% cases occurring in the texts. In the sentences the arrangement of verb-subject in indirect question format should be inverted into subject-verb. The form of verb-subject in question word of these sentences should be inverted because the form after question word is the noun or object of sentence. These error cases can be seen in the following examples:

Error	Suggested Correction
he just obey what did Febby ask	he just obey what Febby asked
Muchlas parents have reason why should Muchlas continue in boarding school.	Muchlas parents have reason why Muchlas should continue in boarding school.
Sarah asked people where was he	Sarah asked people where he was

The form of question word in the sentence (i), ‘what did Feby ask’, should be inverted become ‘what Feby asked’. The auxiliary verb ‘did’ is omitted and the simple form of verb is changed to the past form of verb, while the verb ‘ask’ should be added by –ed. The form of question word in the sentence (ii), ‘why should Muchlas continue’, should be inverted become ‘why Muchlas should continue’. The modal auxiliary verb ‘should’ is moved and placed between subject and predicate,

while the verb ‘continue’ should in the simple form because it follows the modal auxiliary. Meanwhile, the form of question word in the sentence (iii), ‘where was he’ should be inverted become ‘where he was’. The auxiliary verb ‘was’ is a main verb that should be moved and placed after the subject.

Miscellaneous

This study found some errors than cannot be assigned to the classification proposed by Ho. Then, the writer groups those errors into miscellaneous classification. The writer creates 3 (three) sub-categories in miscellaneous errors, which are unnecessary insertion of auxiliary verb/ verb, inappropriate form of tenses in verb and auxiliary verb, and omission of ‘be’ as main verb. The total number of errors in these three sub-categories is 413 or 35.8%. These cases become the second biggest errors in the students’ narrative and recount texts. The samples of errors in each of miscellaneous sub-category can be seen below.

Unnecessary insertion of auxiliary verb/ verb

There are 35 or 3.3% cases of ‘unnecessary insertion of auxiliary verb/ verb’ occurring in the texts. In the sentences the insertion of auxiliary verb/ verb is unnecessary. The samples of this kind of error that occurs in the students’ narrative and recount texts can be seen below:

Error	Suggested Correction
She was lived in Jaya village	She lived in Jaya village
She is cried every day	She cried every day
She was cooked for her dinner	She cooked for her dinner

The insertion of auxiliary verb/ verb in those sentences is incorrect because the sentences are active voice. The sentences will become passive if the auxiliary verb is inserted to those sentences.

Inappropriate form of tenses in verb and auxiliary verb

There are 311 or 28.9% cases of ‘inappropriate form of tenses in verb and auxiliary verb’ occurring in the texts. In the sentences which these cases occur, the tenses in verb and auxiliary verb are inappropriate. The samples of these error cases can be seen below:

Error	Suggested Correction
She always goes to the church every day	She always went to the church every day
I will not feel so lonely	I would not feel so lonely
She is beautiful, smart, and kind	She was beautiful, smart, and kind

The verb and auxiliary verbs of those sentences which are in the simple present form should be changed to past form because narrative and recount texts do not use simple present tense.

Omission of ‘be’ as main verb

There are 67 or 6.2% cases of ‘unnecessary insertion of auxiliary verb/ verb’ occurring in the texts. In the sentences ‘be’ as a main verb is omitted. A sentence with ‘be’ as the main verb has three basic patterns: ‘be’ + a noun, ‘be’ + an adjective, and ‘be’ + a prepositional phrase. The sentence errors in omitting of auxiliary verb that are found in the students’ narrative and recount texts are in all of those basic patterns. The samples of these error cases can be seen below:

Error	Suggested Correction
She ^ a liver girl since her father <i>die</i>	She was a liver girl since her father <i>died</i>
She ^ beautiful and rich	She was beautiful and rich
his school ^ in the same place like me	his school was in the same place like me

After having known the error types in verbs and verb groups and the frequency of each error of Ho's classification, in this part, the writer gives an interpretation of the errors in verbs and verb group produced by the students. The findings of this study show that Language Stream students of SMA Negeri 3 Surabaya often make errors of verbs and verb groups in their writing, especially in the narrative and recount texts. The errors found in the students writing may be related to the students' background knowledge in Bahasa Indonesia and their lack of knowledge in English grammatical rules. They might directly apply the grammatical rules of their first language (Bahasa Indonesia) into another language (English).

Of the ten error classifications in verbs and verb groups, the biggest number of errors was in the 'omission of suffix *-s/ -es/ -ed/ -ing*' (457 cases or 42.4 %). All sentences in this error case occur because of omission of suffix *-d/-ed* on the verb of those sentences. The verbs of those sentences should be added suffix *-ed/ -d* to show if the events of the story happened in the past. As we know, narrative and recount texts use past tense because it tells about the chronological events in the past. All of the students make errors in this case, which may be because in Bahasa Indonesia grammar there is no tense or its aspects.

The second biggest error is regarding miscellaneous classification. The total number of the three subcategories in miscellaneous classification is 413 cases or 38.4%. The biggest errors of miscellaneous subcategories are in 'inappropriate form of tenses in verb and auxiliary verb' (311 cases or 28.9 %). In this case, the students not only prefer to use simple present (She buys a novel in a bookstore) rather than past tense (She bought a novel in a book store), but they also prefer to use simple form of 'be' (am/ is/ are/ do/ has/ have) and simple form of modal (can/ will/ may) rather than past form of 'be' (was/ were) and past form of modal (could/ would/ might). The errors in this case are similar to the errors of 'omission of suffix *-s/ -es/ -ed/ -ing*', which are the biggest errors in the students' narrative and recount texts. The error cases in 'omission of suffix *-s/ -es/ -ed/ -ing*' and 'inappropriate form of tenses in verb and auxiliary verb' are about the errors in the past tense form.

From the two biggest error cases in verbs and verbs groups, the writer tries to make an interpretation. The main problem of both cases is that the Language Stream students seem to have a lack understanding of the usage of past tense. Whereas, based on the English curriculum of senior high school, 'past tense' is taught in grade X (10). The students still make errors in grammatical aspect of past tense because they might be unconscious that past tense is used in narrative and recount texts. It is because the senior high school students do not only learn about narrative and recount texts, but they also learn the other eleven texts, such as recount, procedural, descriptive, report, news items, analytical exposition, persuasive exposition, spoof, explanation, discussion and review, which have different rules in writing. Besides, although the students already have some knowledge about past tense, they still have lack knowledge in using past tense because they might rarely practice in using past tense, especially in writing.

The result of this study is related to the previous study conducted by Mahardika (2008) who found that the biggest grammatical error in students' critical essays was in tenses. Thus, this study concludes that the second language writers mostly produce the errors in their writing regarding the production of tenses. As we know, English (as their second language) has tenses to indicate the time of an event, while Bahasa Indonesia (as their first language) does not have tenses. The errors of verbs and verb groups produced by Language Stream students of SMA Negeri 3 Surabaya in their writing in narrative and recount texts tend to be caused by the influence of their first language (Bahasa Indonesia) and their lack of knowledge in English grammar.

Conclusion

Having a good knowledge of English grammar may support the students in their learning process. Grammar is considered an important component of the basic foundation to support the language learning skills because it is a set of rules that allow us to combine words in language into larger units. Indonesian learners usually make some errors, especially in grammar, during their English learning process which is as their second language. However, making error is a natural part of learning process because it can give a feedback to second language learners for having a better understanding about English. Through error analysis, it can give evidence about learners' error which can be as the feedback of their learning process.

This study has attempted to find out the error types of verbs and verb groups which occur in the students' writing by error taxonomy of verbs and verb groups proposed by Ho (2005). Then, this study explains about the errors of verbs and verb groups in concerning to verb type, modality, and voice (Ho, 2005). Based on the analysis, this study found 1075 cases of errors in verbs and verb groups. The most errors are coming from omission of suffix *-s/ -es/ -ed/ -ing* and the second biggest errors is coming from inappropriate of tenses in verb and auxiliary verb (one subcategories of miscellaneous error). The main problem of both cases is the Language Stream students might have a lack understanding about the usage of past tense. The students might feel unconscious that past tense is used in narrative and recount texts. Besides that, although the students have been learning English since in their first year of senior high school, they still make error in the past tense because they might have lack knowledge of past tense usage because they rarely practice in using past tense, especially in writing.

From those reasons above, it seem that the errors which is produced by the students in their narrative and recount texts is as the effect of the influence of their first language (*Bahasa Indonesia*) and the lack of knowledge of the second language (English). As we know, *Bahasa Indonesia* does not have tenses, while English have tenses to indicate the time of an event. The writer suggests that the students should do many writing exercise to increase their English skill, especially in using the correct form of grammar in writing. In addition, the English teacher should give a more discussion about English writing in the class to increase the student's writing skill, especially in grammar.

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